

Minneapolis Pedestrian Advisory Committee Meeting

Wednesday, February 1, 2023

Present: Neal Baxter, Harmony Anderson, Matthew Steinrueck, Andrew Frenz, Leisa Meeuwen-Ristuben, Aundrea Curtis, Andrea Riehl, Austin Holik, Raina Urton, Julia Curran; Kadence Novak, Andrew Degerstrom, Heidi Schallberg, Rattana Sengsoulichanh, Julie Danzl

Vice-Chair Raina called the meeting to order at 4:03 PM.

Resolutions: (see at the end)

Approval of the Agenda

Neal moved the agenda; Aundrea seconded. Approved.

Approval of the Minutes

Andrea moved the minutes for the December meeting; Neal seconded. Approved.

Demographic Survey—Tate Nguyen, Neighborhood and Community Relations Dept., City of Minneapolis

NCR conducts surveys in order to ascertain whether the membership of the City's boards and commissions reflects the diversity of the population. Tate handed all present the current survey, and we took a few minutes to fill them out. Andrew sent a link to the survey via e-mail to members not in attendance today.

Infrastructure & Engineering Subcommittee Report—Leisa Meeuwen-Ristuben, co-chair

We saw several projects at our January meeting. First, the Lyndale Avenue 4 to 3 Pilot, which would reduce traffic lanes on Lyndale to three. We liked this project. We want to see how traffic patterns change and if that affects safety on Lyndale. Kadence and Matt pointed out that parking lots and side streets are being used as short cuts in some spots.

Second, we heard about the Green Central Safe Routes to School project. This project will add a bikeway near the school, which students will have the chance to paint. We wondered about the level of engagement of the children, who won't be in school during the summer. This project is scheduled for completion in April 2023.

Next we heard from the staff working on the 2nd Street South resurfacing project. This project generated a lot of discussion. We gave the improvements here our support. We want a bikeway on the same side of the road throughout the project. Raina read the resolution (see below) on this project; Neal seconded. Approved.

Also note that Barb Olson has stepped down as co-chair of the subcommittee. The PAC will elect her replacement in March.

Programs & Policies Subcommittee Report—Austin Holik, co-chair

At our December meeting, the committee saw a presentation on the coming year's Capital Improvements Projects (CIP) list (for 2024-2029). Julia Curran read the resolution(#2 below); Neal seconded. Approved.

We also talked about winter maintenance of sidewalks and streets in December.

At the January meeting, we heard a presentation on traffic signals. The City is analyzing how to add Leading Pedestrian Interval to the signal mix. LPI gives pedestrians a 4-second head start when crossing the street.

We talked more about winter maintenance, too, and drafted a resolution on this. Julia read the resolution (#3 below); Neal seconded. Approved.

Austin: The February 16 City Council meeting, I believe, will take up winter maintenance. They want responses by the end of March.

Curran: I suggest we attend, and bring like-minded citizens, too.

Frenz: Not a bad idea, but these meetings usually include no time for residents to comment.

In December we also heard about the Climate Equity Plan that staff is working on, and the Racial Equity Framework.

Kadence: Staff wanted a resolution on the Framework, though the comment period ended a week or so ago.

To help us decide what to say about this, we looked at the resolution adopted by the Bicycle Advisory Committee. Members commented on the BAC's resolution, which included items not of equal importance to the PAC. We worked on language we liked, and Raina read the resolution (#4); Neal seconded. Approved.

Announcements

Raina: I talked with police officers recently who were involved in Operation Endeavor. They told me that police cars parked on sidewalks represents a training problem. That isn't standard procedure anywhere. Also, the Mayor talked with the North Loop Neighborhood meeting the other evening. He proposed closing some streets in our area to traffic, and that met with much enthusiasm from my neighbors.

Andrea: I'm on the CAC group for Hennepin County's Franklin Avenue project. The plan looks good so far. There will be an Open House about it in March.

Adjournment

Leisa moved to adjourn; Neal seconded. Approved, and adjourned at 5:18 PM.

Resolutions as approved.

(#1)--2nd Street South Resurfacing and Pedestrian Improvements

PAC supports the 2nd Street South Resurfacing and Pedestrian Improvements project design for its narrowed road widths and shorter crossing distances, pedestrian refuge islands being made permanent, and the off-street protected bike path.

PAC prefers the north side placement of the bike path for its greater sun exposure during the snow season. Should the north side placement be untenable at any point of the corridor we ask that the path be moved to the south side in full, rather than having the path shifting mid-point from one side to the other.

PAC calls for a final design phase built on engagement with all users of the corridor: residents, visitors, and those relying on South 2nd Street for safe travel to destinations beyond.

PAC also recommend the following improvements:

- Closure of the 13th Ave sidewalk gap (in partnership with the U of M).
- Marked crosswalks and/or raised crossings at priority intersections.
- Reduction of unused or underused driveway curb cuts.

(#2)--2023 PAC Capital Improvement Program ResolutionThe Pedestrian Advisory Committee continues to advocate for capital improvement projects that elevate and prioritize pedestrian needs in the city of Minneapolis. A dense and connected network of 24/7/365 pedestrian routes is critical to community vitality, climate change mitigation and adaptation, social engagement, basic disability rights, racial justice, public safety, senior independence and family well-being, public health, and the overall vibrancy of our city. We ask that CIP incorporate the following:

- Accessibility features enabling safe and comfortable travel for all users of pedestrian infrastructure
- Increased funding for sidewalk repair (the current plan leaves sidewalk repair with the smallest percentage of allocated funds)
- Plans to develop and improve drainage so that sidewalks and curb cuts are useable in winter and spring seasons as well as after intense

precipitation.

- Use of CIP funding to include benches in pedestrian projects, particularly in downtown and other areas where benches have been removed; benches are the most basic pedestrian infrastructure and crucial to walkable neighborhoods for many people, especially those with disabilities or traveling with children
- Continued rapid implementation of 4-to-3 lane conversions
- Halt the roll-back of automatic pedestrian recall along major corridors and downtown, and instead focus on improving pedestrian signalization

The well-established urgency of climate collapse means that our Public Works Department must show leadership in applying their immense expertise to material climate issues of encouraging mode share shift, basic safe and comfortable walking/wheelchair access for all residents regardless of disability or neighborhood, and laying the foundation for iterative, flexible, and innovative plans that can meet the needs of the rapid changes we are starting to experience. As the PAC, we encourage Public Works to be bold in its use of the CIP, rather than continuing to build for a world that is eroding beneath our streets.

(#3)--Minneapolis 2023 Winter Maintenance Study

As Minneapolis undertakes a new winter maintenance study, the PAC urges City leaders and Public Works to seek and reveal viewpoints representative of all of Minneapolis, and to deliver creative and forward-looking winter maintenance solutions. Being a truly world class city for all residents and visitors to Minneapolis in winter requires this level of commitment.

On Being a Winter Pedestrian in Minneapolis

Minneapolis is well-known for its winter culture. Residents and visitors embrace the cold climate with outdoor activities, festivals, markets, and other social gatherings. We as a city can demonstrate winter pride by striving for a safely navigable Minneapolis in all seasons. The purpose of this resolution is to improve the pedestrian and bicycle winter maintenance study and secure additional funding to implement evidence-based solutions from the study.

Being a pedestrian in the winter in Minneapolis should be safe, comfortable, and accessible for all residents regardless of neighborhood, age, ability, or mode of movement. This experience does not exist currently due to poor sidewalk clearing, which creates several issues for pedestrians:

- Residents face isolation when pedestrian or transit options are inaccessible due to dangerous and neglected snowy, icy streets.
- Individuals with access to vehicles become more likely to drive during the winter, leading to an increase in vehicle trips, road congestion, and emissions.
- Pedestrians navigating poor sidewalk conditions are at an increased risk of injury and tend to walk in the street with vehicle traffic.
- Neighborhoods become less vibrant as people are forced to stay indoors, or choose private vehicle transportation, which can lead to decreased neighborhood cohesion.

Sidewalk clearing is only one part of a much larger systemic issue, and we urge the City to consider a wide range of innovative solutions, especially as a changing climate means warmer and wetter winters with more severe weather events.

PAC Recommended Winter Maintenance Study Elements

1. Encompassing of many interest groups, both in official advisory capacity and in broader view.
2. A comprehensive community engagement strategy that considers what voices are present and actively seeks voices that are missing. Community engagement must go well beyond 311 calls.
3. Strong consideration of aging populations and those with mobility challenges that keep them fully or partially homebound in winter due to difficulty in navigating pedestrian infrastructure.
4. Blunt appraisal of equity and the experience of residents in traditionally under-invested neighborhoods and ensure that winter maintenance does not continue to adversely impact those areas disproportionately.
5. A consideration of quick build solutions for near term improvements to pedestrian experience while considering a long-term plan to address quality of life, safety, and increased access to pedestrian experiences.
6. Sidewalk design, complete street modifications, and alternatives to salt should be considered and incorporated. Study the drainage design of sidewalks which is particularly important given increasing freeze/thaw cycles with climate breakdown. Consider the current co-location of storm drains and curb ramps.
7. An understanding of all modes people use to navigate the city including walking, biking, transit, and driving. Create a study design that connects users of all modes and does not inherently center car and driving experiences over other travel modes.
8. An accounting of indirect costs (financial, social, opportunity, etc.) of injuries due to inadequate winter maintenance.
9. Recognition that all winters are not the same and not all snow events are the same.
10. Recognition that a snow event in December will call for a different response than an identical snow in March.

(#4)--Draft Racial Equity Framework

The Minneapolis Pedestrian Advisory Committee supports this draft plan as presented that is an important step to addressing the City's commitments to climate justice, racial justice, and Complete Streets. The staff's efforts put into producing this draft policy are laudable. The PAC recommends that City staff disaggregate race and ethnicity data.

The PAC would like to be updated quarterly or as major milestones are reached on this topic at future PAC meetings.

The PAC would also like these questions addressed:

- How will this plan inform specific future projects and programs in the Capital Improvement Program as well as Regional Solicitation applications?
- Can Public Works share the overall matrix scoring of specific project and program selections?
- Will Transportation Equity Priority scores be factored into project scoring like at MPRB?